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POETRY.

[COMMUNICATED.

Suicide's Excuse—Life all sorrow and pain.

Why will man live to heave the sigh—
Why bear his heavy load?
Is it a crime to dare to die,—
To die, and meet thy God?

'Tis nought but sorrow here on earth—
'Tis nought but pain and woe;
Man's destin'd, from his early birth,
To mis'ry here below.

His days are few, his sorrows great,
His joys are not secure;
How weak, how vain his mortal state,
His hopes and bliss impure.

His steps beset with artful wiles,
Dark dangers on each hand—
His words betray'd by treach'rous smiles,
His thoughts are basely scann'd.

His actions trumpeted aloud,
By envy and by spite;
The jest, the scorn of every crowd,
To earth a hateful sight.

To trust his friendship is a crime,
For *that* he ne'er does prove—
And loathsome is the weary time
When man will speak of love.

His love is feign'd—his oaths are lies—
His friendship but a snare;
His reckless honor has no ties,
But interest or self-care.

In vilest form man is conceiv'd,
To answer any will:
Deceives his friend, himself deceiv'd,
His purpose to fulfil.

Oh! why endure this earthly strife—
Say, why endure this pain?
'Tis God that *gave* man's hateful life,
And God shall *have* again!

Then courage, O my drooping heart,
Thy throbs shall have an end—
Then *dare* to act the nobler part,
And welcome Death, thy friend. W.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Hungarian Tales & Legends.

BY MISS PARDOE.

CHAP. IX.

THE VENETIAN BRIDES.

In the early days of the Venetian Republic, there existed a custom borrowed from earlier antiquity. On a certain day in the year the affianced maidens of Venice, rich and poor, noble and plebeian, walked in procession, attired in robes symbolical of their virgin purity. The poor had dowers from the state—small, but as large relatively to their condition as were settled upon the daughters of the noble and the wealthy.

The annual day selected for the procession of the betrothed and their friends was that of the Purification of the Virgin, on the second of every February; and the year in which the event commemorated took place was that of 944. Numerous contemporary and successive authorities allude to the pomp and circumstance by which it was attended, to give peculiar force of example to the scene. Many of the brides were related to noble houses; the state dowers, the magnificent presents of the several friends of the parties, with emulous pride exhibited, and the presence of several illustrious strangers, gave more than usual attraction to the approaching fete. The slender dower to each of the poorer daughters of the state was carried by them in a little coffer, called *Arcella*, in those simpler days sufficient to hold their entire fortune; for, according to the old chronicle, it was not the custom to make a trade of the affections, though they were glad to do so of every thing else, being a remarkably exact and mercantile people, with their eye upon the property of other states as well as their own. Twelve of the higher ranks were headed by the Doge, the council and its attendants in state; and it was customary for the whole procession first to enter the church in the little island of Olivolo, where they awaited their bridegrooms, surrounded by throngs of spectators, and heard the mass, followed by a discourse upon reciprocal duties, which we had rather leave to the imagination of our fair readers, the oratory of the Fra Agostino Longavento being, like that of our humorous friend Friar Gerund, not a little inclining to be lengthy. The bishop confirmed each pair in good matrimonial behavior; gave them his *benediction*, when immediately each *Benedict*, having finished a world of ceremonies, took his companion by the hand, and, with their new dower, they made the best of their way to enjoy themselves with the feast, the song, and the dance, in their own little festive circle at home.

Such was the customary usage; but it did not reach that pleasant point without interruption on that day, just ushering in the palmy tide of Venetian power. Her various islands were peopled thick as with a race of moiling ants; forests of shipping thronged her shores, and the remote island of Olivolo was fixed upon as the reunion of the pride and beauty of Venice, little dreaming how near to them lay concealed the mysteries of fate, the no longer dreaded pirate bands, so recently worsted by the great Dandolo—

"That hushed in grim repose expect their evening prey"

Arrayed in white, with veils flowing to their feet, and the peculiarly rich and full costume, which gives at once grace and dignity to the figure, the patrician brides, literally gem and diamond-spangled, shone with resplendent beauty, more remarkable from the contrast it offered to the simple unadorned graces of the less elevated class.—The utmost splendor and variety of decorations gave additional zest to the festival; the most sacred solemnities partook of the nature of a carnival in old catholic times, combining every species of game, and dance, and carol. Not a soul but was put in requisition for some inventive faculty. When, as they were on the point of descending from the portico of the temple, anticipating the fullest zest to their wild, innocent mirth, —a rush of feet, the rough voice and the sight of fearful-looking men, each rushing on his fair prey, threw strange consternation throughout the glad and festal scene. Sudden as a whirlwind it came over the proudest of rising cities—founded on the sea—that had defied and escaped the vengeance of the Roman and the Goth, and was now bearded in its temples and palaces by a band of desperate adventurers—by robbers and pirates. The spouse of the sea, the Cybele of nations, could it suffer the stain of dishonor to rest upon it—a track of darkness, of dread, of shame, to the invincible and free? Were they, the scourge of the sea robbers, to suffer this? Already the wealth and beauty of their city were borne by sacrilegious hands upon the sea—by bands of men whom they had met, discomfited, and driven from their open haunts into the creeks and corners of the world. The thought was madness; for they knew that their daughters, wives, and sisters would instantly be carried to enrich the seraglios of the infidel—the most hated of all enemies, who kept Venice in continual alarm. How dread a visitation upon the young empress of the seas and isles! to pray in humble guise to infidels, and crouch, for fear of utter shame, under the slave banner of the crescent.

Long and silently had the most daring of the foiled sea-booters watched their opportunity of revenge,—to strike a blow at the lords of the isles, who seemed ambitious of subduing the whole world. The project was as daringly executed as it was conceived: at the dead of night, preceding the festive scene, the pirate chiefs and their crews, mostly composed of renegades, succeeded in concealing themselves in the small canals and creeks opening from the sea at Olivolo. To carry off such a prize of Venetian beauty would at once make their fortunes, and inflict a fearful revenge—an indignity, of all the most galling for such a people to bear. With equal craft and coolness they burst upon their victims ere joined by their lovers and friends, when heated by the Doge and the magistrates, arrayed in all the paraphernalia of bridal costume. It was the work of a moment: the shrieks, the brief struggle, the capture, and the sight of the pirate boats putting out to sea, conveyed the first intelligence that daughters, wives, and sisters, were in the power of their inhuman ravishers. The only farewell was the cry of despairing brides, heard fainter and fainter as it came borne upon the breeze over the waters. What an agonizing moment!

One, however, had been present who in the midst of danger remained still unappalled; it was the Doge himself—the great Candian III., who took one hurried glance of the pirates at the point where their vessels lay; and soon was heard the grand tocsin, the lion bell of St. Mark, rung only in moments of imminent peril. Then was heard the rush of gathering thousands towards the shore, and the pirate race began. Throwing himself into one of the first boats, the Doge had but one order upon his lips, "*Seguite in traccia*, follow, follow!" the breeze rose brisker as they strained every nerve, but it favored their pursuers as well.

One prayer to their patron saint rose within the hearts of all, that they might reach the robbers before they had time to couch within their predal lairs. But it was not long the Doge Pietro held the head of the piratical chase;—Andrea de'Cappelli pressed onward in the van of the free trades and artisans of Venice, ready to peril all for the sake of love and vengeance. Andrea was only a plebeian, but he was one of Nature's nobles, and an impassioned lover; and it now became interesting to observe the emulation awakened in the aristocratic sons and brothers who beheld their brides borne by common pirates from their sacred homes.—The young Dandoli, the Cornari, the Foscoli, and the Conti, vied with the trades to bring the ravishers first to action, but the Cappelli had marked the vessel which contained their brides, and their efforts were almost superhuman. The ship of Ali Bey, the pirate chief, was the first to present its prow to the trade boats, which rushed on to board her. The action took place near Caorle, and it was fierce as it was brief and decisive. That vessel first struck its colors to the Cappelli; a tacit reproach to the lords, which announced the superiority or good fortune of the people. To give this more marked distinction, Andrea held his youthful bride in one arm, in the other the head of the pirate chief; and shouts rent the air which proclaimed the victory throughout the wide seigniory of Venice. Not a pirate escaped; it was the triumph of fidelity in the heart of a bold and simple people.

Had it not been for the speedy death of the robber chief, Ali Bey, the contest would have been more prolonged. It was a blow to the pride of the lords as well as the pirates, when the heads of the latter exhibited at the prows of the vessels, counted more than two for one in the boats of the common sailors and fishermen of the thousand isles. Not a pirate boat escaped which they attacked; they completed their work before the patricians; for, with a noble and magnanimous fidelity which evinced the love of their order, instead of assisting the grandees they attacked the violators of their own loves, and were the first, amidst the shouts of the entire city, to bear them back to their nuptial homes. The Doge had the nobleness and good tact to honor the precedence thus won by the commons; crowned with laurel wreaths and garlands, the same with which they had thrown themselves on their bridal prowess, they now marshalled their way back with their young wives and the heads of their too daring ravishers, to their happy friends and relatives. Young Andrea and his bride were received with the acclamations of every rank; for all feelings of jealously were for the moment lost, and the dance and revelry were renewed.

The bodies of the pirates were, by order of the Doge, thrown into the sea, while their heads remained the trophies of their conquerors. The little gate by which they returned from the pursuit was named the *Porto delle Donzelle*, which it bears to this day.

It is surprising how an event of this unforeseen nature gave fresh impulse to the Venetian fame; and the lovely and beautiful rescued from the terrors of an ignominious slavery, felt increased pride and delight in giving their hands to men who had known so well how to defend them.

The first work of the Council was to strike a medal in honor of the artizans of Venice—of that Andrea who led lords and princes the way to honor, and first clasped his virgin bride as he trampled upon the lifeless corpse of his country's enemy. More than this, it was the triumph of the people—it was one of the plebeian class that had honored his country; and to ingratiate themselves with the rising Venice, the Grand Council placed him in the road of patrician honors, and adopted his bride the daughter of their common country. Urged by the people, they appointed also an annual carnival on the eventful second of February, when the attack took place; and as Andrea, his bride, and his brave companions, were natives of the isle sacred to the lovely Virgin—Santa Maria Formosa—it was stipulated, as a bond of enduring interest between the patricians and the people, that the celebration of the lover's victory, armed only with crowns of flowers and the spirit of resistless love and glory, should take place in this less secluded and romantic spot, from whose open and populous shore no sea adventurers dare rush on their intended prey.

As the well-remembered day came round, the Doge was invited to preside at the annual celebration of the festival. Willing to try the temper of the people, and to conciliate them by some further holidays, he affected to raise difficulties, inquiring what he should do in case it rained? "Oh!" replied the friends of Andrea, "we will find *hats* enough (*Cappelli*, a large and numerous family of the hero) to cover your head."—"But if I should have thirst," persisted the veteran, "what shall I do?"—"We will then give you *Da Bere*" (to drink), the name of another plebeian family; and the good-humored Doge, with the simplicity of those frank and heroic times, joined cheerily in the people's laugh. "You have fairly won your saint's day and holidays to follow it," was his reply. "Benedetta sia La Maria Formosa, and her island of lovely brides and brave men:" and from that hour to the last day of the Republic, the Doge, attended by the Signoria, went in procession to the same church of Santa Maria, where he was presented by the inhabitants of the island with *Cappelli*, hats of golden straw, with flasks of malvazin and some ceranci.* What an idea of happy and unstudied simplicity, observes the historian, in those golden times! Among the few changes which the festival underwent, it formerly assumed the name of *Festa delle Marie*; it also became highly patrician in its character as well as national; and it still continued to be celebrated on the day of the Purification. Strangers from all sides hastened to witness its happy and innocent rites, for never pirate again placed foot upon the citadel isles of the sea. The festal day, in truth, became a carnival such as was never equalled in any part of Italy, which continued upwards of eight days; it received the name of Ludi Mariani; and the Marian Games, like the Megalesi, the Cereali, the Floreali, and so many others, became a theme for the poets.

During these eight days, twelve among the loveliest maidens were escorted with all pomp and honor through the city, and they were selected equally from different parts, having equal votes assigned to them on the score of virtue as of loveliness. It was the province of the Doge to confirm the choice made; the respective parishes furnished the state and decorations of the festival, and the nation gladly supported a festival which each day supplied a new spectacle. They also made expeditions by sea, where they were received in state by the Doge in his Bucentaur; formed a magnificent procession and went subsequently to return thanks at the church. They then accompanied the Doge to San Marco, from the lion-steps of which he addressed the assembled throngs, and gave them his paternal benediction,—the first to lead them to battle, and the last to return. They were then considered doubly favored by Heaven, and the *Marie*, as they were termed, were courted and feted by patricians and citizens of the highest rank.

It is humiliating to human pride to trace the progress of corruption in the best and most innocently devised ceremonies, which had their origin in the purest and grandest motives. It is with reluctance we are bound to add, that with the alteration of early customs and manners, women of a very different or rather indifferent character found their way into the places of the pretty *Marie;* till at length the patience of the magistrates and of the people became alike exhausted; wooden images were substituted, and instead of being attended, like the brides of Venice, with pomp and circumstance, they were heartily pelted by throngs of boys and girls;—as if to show that the influence of beauty must have an end.

*A kind of fruit. The event also formed the subject of a noble poem by Carlo Gozzi and his friends.

MEMORY.—It is strange—perhaps the strangest of all the mind's intricacies—the sudden, the instantaneous manner in which memory, dark store houses in which long passed events have been shut up for years. That signal, be it a look, a tone, an odor, a single sentence, is the cabalistic word of the Arabian tale, at the potent magic of which the door of the cave of the robber, Forgetfulness, is cast suddenly wide, and all the treasures that he had concealed displayed. Upon the memory of the traveller rushed up the visions of his youthful days; the sports of boyhood, the transient cares, the quarrels soon forgotten, the pains which passed away like summer clouds; the pure sweet joys of youth, and innocence, and ignorance of ill, that never return when once passed away.

An inventory has lately been taken of the crown diamonds, pearls, &c., of France.—The number of these is computed at 61,312, weighing 28,751 carats, and valued at 21,900,260 francs. The inventory taken on the return of Louis the Eighteenth from Ghent—to which place the crown jewels were removed for security when the King left Paris, on the approach of Napoleon from Elba—is said to have given the same results.

Dow, Jr., of the New York Sunday Mercury, in a late sermon on the importance of preparing to die, addressed the ladies thus—

"Ah! soon those sparkling eyes will lose their lustre in the dim evening twilight of existence. Time will kiss every particle of paint from your cheeks—the roses will fade in the wreath of loveliness, and you will be no more an object of attraction than a dried mullen stock in a sheep pasture."

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To man, he said:—"What is man but a vegetable that springs from the dust buds, blossoms, ripens, sows its seed, and then amalgamates with its original dust? In the spring-time of youth he flourishes like a squash vine near a barn yard—in the summer-time of manhood he exhibits both fruits and flowers—in the autumn of age he withers and decays—and then the winter of death hides him forever from the world."

WORSE THAN THE TOOTHACHE.—A Dutchman, in proceeding to a place from whence he heard the cries of distress, discovered one of his neighbors lying under a stone wall which had fallen upon him and fractured his legs. 'Vell, neighbor Vanderdikin; vat ish de matter vid you?' 'Vat! vy you sees my condition, vid all dese pig stones upon me, and bote mine legs proke off close to mine poddy.' 'Mine Cot,' said Hanse, 'ish dat all? you hollared so like de tivil, I thought you was got de toothache.'

From the New Orleans Picayune.

Law in Mississippi:

OR, AN OFFENSIVE DEFENCE.

Perhaps the jurisprudence of Mississippi within the last few years has given birth to a wider range of pleading, and brought forth more pure, native, forensic eloquence than the highest tribunal of our country in the meantime. Few persons, being strangers and not 'to the manner born,' who should enter one of the roughly constructed temples of justice in the interior counties of the State, before the solemn 'Oyez! oyez! oyez!' of the crier proclaimed its formal opening, could, from a hasty glance at the bench, the bar, the inferior offices, litigants and loafers, anticipate the legal research, the great professional ability and lofty eloquence which, like a subterranean stream struggling to be free, were shortly to burst forth to the light of day and the edification of all whose good fortune it might be to obtain a verdict in their favor.

Who could suppose—not knowing the parties—that he in the threadbare black coat, with the bran bread countenance, who asks the man in the brown flannel frock for a chew of tobacco—who, we say, could suppose that he holds the fortunes, aye, the lives of free and independent Mississippians within his grasp; that he it is who wields the sword of justice and poises its scales in the air of law and equity? And again, who could imagine that that rollicking, good looking young man, with his feet on the bench, or rather on the deal table before the bench, who is arguing with the ex-bank director on the right of repudiation—who could imagine that under so rough an exterior there lay hidden so much law, so much learning, so much pristine talent, so much pure pathos? But the report of a single case will illustrate our several points better than if we generalized through whole pages. We shall, therefore, select a case from the records of the late term of the Copiah county Court, which, we think, will bear us out in our prefatory remarks. This case stood No. 9 on the docket and was endorsed 'Thomas Taylor *vs.* Wm. Mackew.'

'Taylor vs. Mackew'—'Holwell and Harnett!' said the Clerk, reading from the fixed cases.

'Ready,' said Holwell.

'Ready,' echoed Harnett.

The crier called silence, first expectorating as much tobacco juice on the floor as would send Charley Dickens into a swoon; the witnesses were called, the jury were impannelled and the case proceeded.

It was an action by which the plaintiff claimed right to the possession of three negroes, the property of the defendant. The case was opened by one of plaintiff's counsel, who, by the way, had secured the professional services of three of the legal luminaries of Copiah county. His witnesses were called—their evidence went point blank to the matter at issue, and the general impression was that the unanimous opinion of the jury would be 'verdict for the plaintiff.' When the case for the plaintiff had closed, the judge told Harnett, for the defence, to call his witnesses.

'We mean to dispense with witnesses in this case, may it please the Court,' said Harnett, and this he uttered with an air of confidence that seemed to astonish every body.

'Then do you mean to let the case go by default?' said the judge.

'D—n clear of it,' said Harnett aside and in an under tone to his client, who seemed to look at the thing as 'a gone case'—and then turning to the Court he added, 'We do not, may it please the court, but the plaintiff's counsel have so palpably failed to establish the grounds of this action—they have so evidently shown that the plaintiff's right to my client's negroes is futile and without foundation, that I deem it a waste of time of this honorable court, and a libel on the good sense of that intelligent jury, to offer any evidence or quote one word of the law which applies to the case. Indeed so clear does the case appear to me, that I was thinking of submitting it to the jury without a single remark; but on reflection I have concluded to offer a few observations, that my client may stand before this community in his proper character, that of an honest, honorable and injured man!'

When he spoke of the clearness of the case in his client's favor, the judge looked at the jury and the jury looked at the judge, and one of the plaintiff's counsel whistled 'whew!' But this did not disconcert Harnett, and into the defence he went, jumping over very wisely, as he said he would, all law and evidence, for it would puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer, much less a Mississippi lawyer, to find any of either in his favor.

'Gentlemen,' he said 'I will suppose, for argument sake—for it is only for the sake of argument that such a supposition can be for a moment entertained—I will suppose, I say, that the plaintiff had made out his case; would you, when the debt is only a surety one, deprive my client of his negroes, the only prop and support of his fast declining years? Shall it be said that in the free, independent and repudiating State of Mississippi, the last remnant of my client's property shall be swept away to pay a debt; the first red cent of which he never handled? Shall it be told abroad, among the bank men of New Orleans, the brokers of Wall Street, New York, the Jews of the Royal Exchange in London and the millionaries of the Bourse of Paris, that the three negroes, and the three only which the tornado of bad times, the crash of banks and the surges of suspension had spared him, are now to be gambled away by your verdict! I say gambled away, gentlemen; for such a verdict, in point of injustice, would sink below playing at brag or poker with marked cards—mind you, I say with marked cards, gentlemen.'

He next launched into the pathetics.—'Gentlemen,' said he, 'you all have wives—young, amiable, interesting, lovely wives, Gentlemen, my client too has a wife; but alas! she is neither young, amiable, interesting or lovely. She is old, gentlemen, very old. Amiable she is not, for the vicissitudes of fortune and a constitution broken down by disease, have rendered her an object more to be pitied than admired; interesting or lovely she cannot be, for she has long since passed that period of life when beauty lends its blandishments to the cheek and sprightliness and vivacity add their lustre to personal attractions. Take these negroes away from her and prostrate her—as the immortal Shakspeare so elegantly expresses it—

'——— You do take the prop
That doth sustain her house; you take her life
When you do take the means whereby she lives.'

In fact, gentlemen, I pledge you my professional reputation that you would be all liable to indictment for murder in the first degree should you find a verdict against my client.'

At this announcement the jury looked startled, the judge looked astonished, and at the several negative compliments paid to his better half, the plaintiff seemed nowise pleased. The counsel next referred to the head of his client, silvered o'er with age—no, not with age, for he was comparatively a young man, but with the frosts of misfortune.—Here the defendant darted out of the court in an apparent rage. The counsel continued his ingenious defence, and finally wound up by an ardent appeal to the virtue, intelligence, independence and magnanimity of the jury, to find for the defendant.

The opposite counsel replied. They referred to the conclusive nature of the evidence—to the clearness of the law and the naked facts of the case. The judge charged in favor of the plaintiff, and censured the erratic and unprofessional course of defendant's counsel, but it was all of no avail.—The eloquence of Harnett, the pity-exciting picture which he drew of Mackew's wife, (in which, by the way, there was not one word of truth, for she happened to be a brisk, bouncing woman,) but above all, his threat about arraigning them for murder, did the business with the jury, and without retiring from their seats, they brought in a *verdict for the defendant.*

Harnett immediately left the court, and on his way up to the tavern met his client, who seemed flushed with liquor and much excited. 'Joy! my boy, joy!' said the delighted counsel: 'I've gained the suit.'

'D—n the suit and d—n you, and d—n the negroes,' said Mackew; 'I would'nt suffer the abuse you gave the old woman and myself for the whole consarn. I'll lick you for it, any way you can fix it;' and here he brandished a large stick over his zealous lawyer's head, and would have repaid him for his dextrous professional service with a sound drubbing, had not mutual friends interposed.

Explanations were made to Mackew, who at length became convinced that the talk about his wife's age, ugliness, &c., and about his own gray hair, was 'all in his eye and Elizabeth Martin;' so they adjourned to the tavern and had a general drink.

BROTHER AND SISTER.—As fathers love their daughters better than sons, and mothers love their sons better than daughters, so do sisters feel towards brothers a more constant sentiment of attachment than towards each other. None of the little vanities, heart-rending jealousies, that, alas! poor human nature, are but too apt to spring up in female hearts, can arise between brother and sister: each is proud of the success of the other, because it cannot interfere with self—nay, on the contrary, is flattering to self. Hence, if there be a bond of family union more free from the selfish blots that interrupt all others, it is that which exists between an affectionate sister and brother.

ANCIENT EGYPT.—Egypt comprehended anciently within limits of no very great extent, no fewer than *twenty thousand inhabited cities*. This is stated to have been the case under Amasis, when the number of inhabitants in them, according to the same account, was almost incredible. Its ancient kings are said to have kept armies of 300,000 men in their service.

"No."—The celebrated John Randolph in one of his letters to a young relative, says "I know nothing that I am so anxious you should acquire as the faculty of saying 'no.' You must expect unreasonable requests to be preferred to you every day of your life, and must endeavor to deny with as much facility and kindness as you acquiesce."

TEARS.—There are few things more beautiful than tears, whether they are shed for ourselves or others; they are ever the meek and silent effusions of sincere feeling. All strong passion, in its first and mightiest movements within us, is necessarily voiceless;—and if there were no kindly channel by which its exuberance might gain an escape, reason herself might have cause to tremble.